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# Memorial Concerning Samuel Parsons
1843

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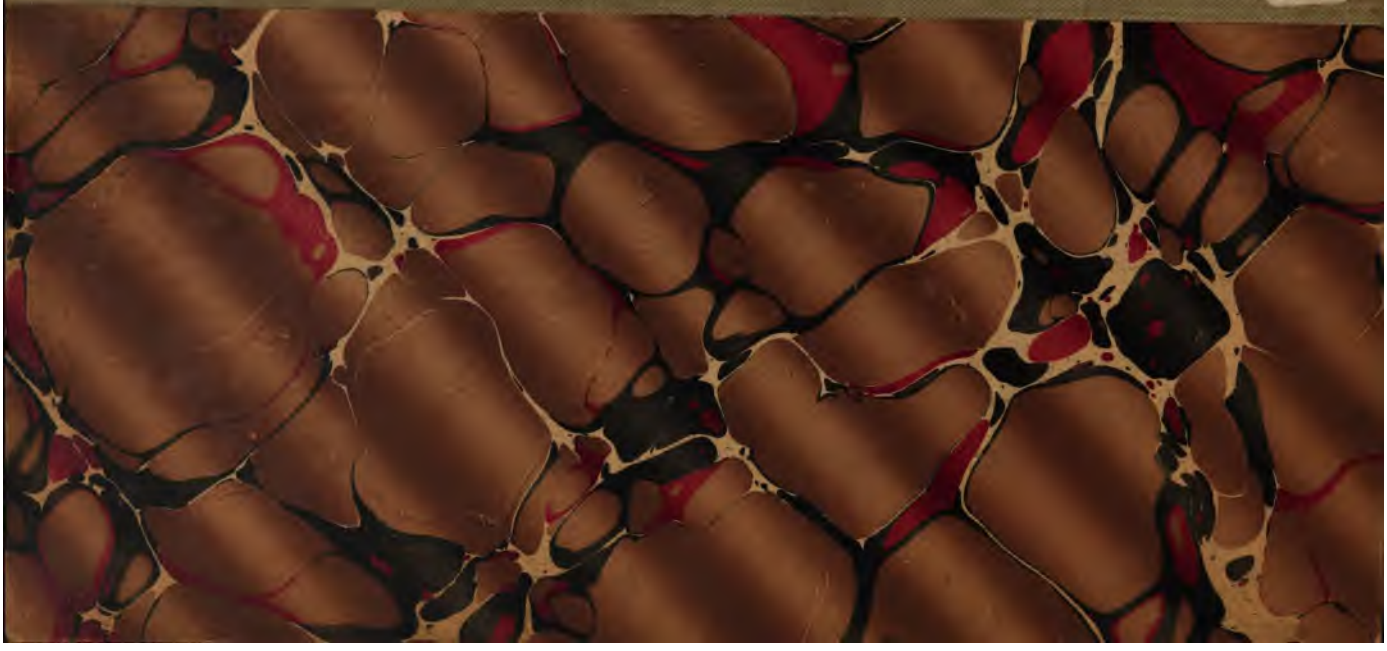

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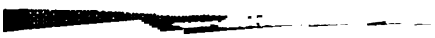

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# MEMORIAL

OF THE

# MONTHLY MEETING OF NEW YORK.

PREPARED BY

## SAMUEL PARSONS.

# MEMORIAL

OF THE

# MONTHLY MEETING OF NEW-YORK,

CONCERNING

# SAMUEL PARSONS.

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# MEMORIAL.

For the benefit of survivors, we are sometimes led to commemorate the lives of those who through devotedness to the cause of truth and righteousness in the earth, have walked uprightly before men, seeking after durable riches and a well-grounded hope of a happy immortality.

The above reflections are induced by the removal from works to rewards of our much loved and highly valued friend Samuel Parsons, He was the son of James and Mary Parsons, members of this Meeting,—was born on the 8th of Eighth-month, 1774, and enjoyed the advantages of a religiously guarded education. He was remarkable, even in early childhood, for tenderness of spirit and correct deportment, and for dutiful and affectionate conduct to his friends and relations. He refrained from the amusements common to that period of life, and was careful to avoid associating with such as were inclined to spend their hours in levity and folly. He very early submitted to the influence of the Spirit of Truth, as appears from his diary, which was commenced about the nineteenth year of his age, and continued till within a few months of his decease. We make the following extracts:

"Sixth-month, 1795.—I view the youthful and the gay around me pursuing happiness in the crowds of business or the haunts of pleasure. I see many of my own age spend their hours in pleasure (falsely so called) too dearly bought by the sacrifice of peace of mind. There have been seasons in my life, when those things would have pleased, but they are no more. I now feel that something more is requisite to satisfy a reasoning mind—an immortal soul. There are seasons when the Divine Monitor speaks in a tone so commanding that it will be heard. Unhappy are those who in the hour of health neglect the still small voice till disease approaches them, when placed on a languishing bed, misery and sorrow, pain and regret are their portion. May these hours by timely reflection be averted—may I prepare in the bloom of youth for the approach of death; that so, when the inevitable hour arrives, I may sink into rest, in the sweet confidence that God is still gracious, and that his mercies fail not."

"Eighth-month, 8, 1795.—This is the anniversary of my birth—on this day I attain the age of twenty-one years. On retrospection—I find that folly and weakness have prevailed; but let the past suffice. The present day calls loudly for a reformation. Since the last anniversary of my birth, many whom I have known, have been numbered with the dead, amongst whom an intimate of my own age claims most my sympathetic recollection. I believe it is designed by Almighty Wisdom that the removal of our friends should impress on our minds the prospect of death, which amidst the bustle of business and the dissipation of gaiety is too seldom viewed but at a distance."

"Eighth-month, 27.—The merciful visitation of the Father of All was extended to me in an unusual manner, and I felt a disposition wrought in me to devote my life to the service of my Creator. May I be favored with strength from on high to walk in the path that leads to peace, and in meekness and humility pursue my journey through this vale of trial."

"Fourth-month, 1796.—Animated by the hope of eternal peace, may I press forward through the varied tribulations of time with an eye turned to the Father of All, who can alone preserve in the hour of conflict, and shield from danger in the day of battle. Trust in the Lord, O my soul, worship and adore Him, whose creative power hath formed thee, whose protecting arm sustaineth and supporteth thee."

"Ninth-Month, 1797.—The overshadowing influence of Heavenly regard hath rested on my mind; and reflecting on the many dangers and sorrows that surround the traveller through this vale of trial, I have been bowed in supplication to the Father of all, that his paternal superintendence may not cease to direct me, and that in my passing through life, I may seek unto him for light to dispel my mental darkness, and to enable me in every situation, to resign myself to His holy will."

Continued memoranda show the operative power of Divine grace upon his mind, qualifying him for uniting with his friends in the support of our Christian testimonies, and for the various stations in society, which he has so usefully filled. He was early appointed to the impor-

tant station of an overseer, which he acceptably filled for many years.

In the year 1806, he was married to MARY BOWNE, daughter of JOHN and ANNE BOWNE, of Flushing, Long Island. This connection proved to be an union of spirit and of heart. The guarded religious education of their children was an united exercise, preferring their present good and everlasting welfare to the uncertain riches of a vain and fleeting world.

Our dear friend continuing to walk in humility and godly fear, became "quick of discernment," and qualified to "stand as a watchman upon the walls." He was appointed to the station of elder about the thirty-fourth year of his age, concerning which he writes:

"6th of Tenth-Month, 1808.—On being appointed to the station of an elder in the church, my heart was bowed in a sense of the awfulness of the charge, and the great degree of circumspection needful to walk answerably thereunto. O may I be enabled so to conduct, that no reproach may be brought on the profession of the truth on my account; but that being called to this trust, and feeling the Divine anointing therein, I may live more and more detached from the world, and devote myself in singleness of heart to His cause—and be made willing to spend and be spent, to labor and travail, that the peculiar testimonies given us to bear, may be spread."

While endeavoring to fill up the measure of his allotment, his spirit was often baptized into suffering, with the

suffering seed, and being livingly concerned for the prosperity of Zion, he became qualified to "speak a word in season," and came forth in the ministry about the forty-first year of his age. Being careful in the exercise of his gift, he experienced an enlargement, becoming an acceptable minister of the Gospel; and as an advocate for "that faith which was once delivered to the saints," he was prepared to sound the alarm when innovations were made in our borders, as will appear by the following extracts:

"Third-Month, 1821.—If we deny the eternity and infinite power of the Son of God, we cease to be Christians. We may be Unitarians—we may be Deists, and trust in the sufficiency of human reason. 'Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.'"

"Third-Month, 1826.—What a mercy it is to receive into our hearts, Christ as our Saviour and Redeemer, not only from the *penalty* but from the *power* of sin—to feel His spirit bearing witness with our spirits, that we are His, and that we have taken Him to be our Saviour, and acknowledge Him to be indeed the Son of God with power."

He was qualified early to detect those unsound doctrines which had been extensively promulgated in our society. These views, so strikingly at variance with those held by our worthy predecessors in the truth,—our beloved friend found it his place to oppose, boldly maintaining the principles of our holy profession, and standing as in the gap, when disorder and misrule seemed likely to lay waste our

solemn assemblies. He was clerk of the Yearly Meeting at the time of the separation in 1828, and the firmness and composure manifested by him on that trying occasion, tended greatly to strengthen the feeble, and confirm the wavering.

In pleading the cause of the oppressed people of color, or of the aborigines of our country, as well as on subjects relative to the support of our Christian Testimonies, he frequently attended the State and National Legislatures, where the Christian virtues exemplified in his character, his modest and unassuming deportment, and the energies of a sound and well regulated mind, endeared him to many not of our name.

His intimate knowledge of the Discipline and History of our Society, aided in qualifying him for the important stations to which he was successively appointed in the church. He filled the station of clerk or assistant clerk to the Yearly Meeting for upwards of thirty years; and from the thirty-third year of his age he was an active and useful member of the Meeting for Sufferings, and for many years served it very acceptably as clerk.

A remarkable trait in his character was forbearance and meekness under provocation, exemplifying in his conduct the excellence of that precept, "If thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink." The practical effects of his principles were strikingly evinced in acts of kindness to his fellow men, without respect to color or profession. Possessing a comprehensive mind, he was qualified to administer counsel, and was often referred to as the friend

of "the widow and fatherless in their affliction." Emphatically a peace-maker, he was frequently employed in the settlement of differences, where his sound discrimination and the sweetness of his disposition, enabled him to overcome difficulties apparently insuperable. He also spent much time in visiting the sick, to whom his sympathy and religious services were particularly consoling and edifying, tending to strengthen the faith and revive the hopes of the faint-hearted; and in his benevolence was ever ready to promote acts of public and private charity, in which he spent much of his outward substance. We believe that few soliciting aid, ever went empty from his door.

In the daily perusal of the scriptures, we have reason to believe he found strength and encouragement from early life. When placed at the head of a family, it was his practice frequently to collect his children and those in his employ, for the purpose of religious reading, and to wait upon Him in whom are all our well-springs. During these seasons of retirement, his spirit was often bowed in supplication to the Throne of Mercy, and the wing of Ancient Goodness was spread over them.

About three years before his decease, he met with a sore bereavement in the removal by death of his beloved wife. She was early and strongly attached to our religious doctrines and testimonies, and successively filled the stations of overseer and elder in the church. In the hope that the influence of a warmer climate would restore her declining health, she was removed to the West Indies, where she departed this life. In allusion to which he writes:

" About six o'clock, 16th of the First-month, she began to breathe shorter and shorter, and thus continued until seven o'clock, when a slight muscular motion passed over her face—the *seal* was set, she ceased to breathe, and we were left to mourn by her side, our sore bereavement, tempered with the submission to the Divine will which she had inculcated upon us—in the full faith that her purified spirit has entered into the mansions of eternal peace and joy."

First-month 17th.—I bowed in prayer before the Lord, renewedly offering up myself in dedication to his service, now that this strong tie to earth, had in His inscrutable wisdom, been broken; desiring to be weaned from the world, redeemed from its spirit, to consider it no longer my abiding place, but to devote all the little time that remains to the service of the Lord."

From this period his mind seemed to be gradually loosening from the ties which bound him to earth; yet being deeply interested in the welfare of his family, he strove for their sakes, to bear up under the afflictive dispensation.

In the spring of 1841, he was attacked by erysipelas, which affected his head, and induced considerable depression of spirits. On one occasion, when appearing to be much distressed, the 14th and 17th chapters of John were read to him, and gradually an expression of sweet peace was spread over his countenance. At another time when his children had been reading to him in the Scriptures, which were almost his only reading during his illness, he said, whatever of sorrow might yet be in store, it was a

comfort to him to know that his children loved the Scriptures.

He had many seasons of spiritual enjoyment; and we are rejoiced in believing that he was often favored with access to the Throne of Grace, being frequent in humble, fervent prayer for himself and his family, also for the church, and its ministry especially; and we doubt not he was at seasons enabled to adopt the language, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me, thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me." His confidence in the promises of the Gospel, manifested during his last illness, when his mind was not affected by disease, was as the seal of a well-spent life.

He died at the house of his son in New-York, whither he had gone for further medical advice, the 20th of Eleventh-month, 1841; and after a solemn opportunity, was interred from his own dwelling, the 23d of the same, in the family burying ground, by the remains of his beloved wife. His funeral was attended by a numerous concourse of people, of various classes and names in religion, who were desirous to unite with his family and friends in paying the last sad tribute of respect to one whom they had loved in life, and mourned in death.